

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Allen Kitchens & Bath Center

Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Allen Kitchen And Bath Builds A Lean Company Culture

Client Profile:

Allen Kitchen and Bath, located in Madison, Wisconsin, manufactures countertops and sells complete kitchen and bath remodeling services. Founded in 1980, the company now employs 40 people.

Situation:

Allen Kitchen and Bath's sales force was pushing 18 percent more orders through the pipeline, but wasteful, inefficient processes congested the flow of manufacturing. When total order processing time came close to five weeks, the company's chief executive officer knew he needed to take immediate action. He sought help from the Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership (WMEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate.

Solution:

WMEP helped Allen Kitchen and Bath literally map out each step of its manufacturing process on a 30-foot wall, from first contact with the client to final project close-out. This exercise, called value stream mapping (VSM), highlights waste and inefficiency. The VSM revealed that many process steps were duplicated and others had not been assigned to a particular employee. With WMEP's help, Allen Kitchen and Bath constructed an action plan targeted at areas for improvement. WMEP also delved into the management culture at Allen Kitchen & Bath and found that most operations-level decisions were made by the CEO himself, leaving him little or no time to devote to company strategy or other high-level decisions. WMEP helped the company develop a more team-centered organization by conducting a lean culture project. As a result, employees are more prepared and empowered to make decisions without having to involve the CEO.

Results:

- Saved an estimated \$20,000 in costs.
- Increased sales by \$96,000.
- Increased sales per employee.
- Reduced lead times and defect rates.
- Reduced order process time from 5 weeks to 6 days.
- Improved employee skills and built morale.

Testimonial:

www.mep.nist.gov



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"The work with the Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership forced us to analyze and recognize our deficiencies, and it gave us a more reliable work environment."

Gary Allen, CEO